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International Court of Justice

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3 July, 1946.
Manstein

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

3 July, 1946.

COMMISSIONER:

Mr. George R Taylor.

THE GENERAL STAFF - OKW.

(THE COMMISSION CONVENED AT 1500 HOURS.)

FIELD MARSHALL ERIC VON MANSTEIN, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Q Raise your right hand and repeat this oath after me:

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

Q What is your name?

A Eric Von Manstein

Q You may sit down.

DR. LATERNSER: I intend to ask this witness concerning all the indictment charges, which have been made against his group.

MR. TAYLOR: Will you proceed in accordance with Colonel Neave's request that you be fair to the other organizations and that you examine this

witness in as short a time as possible.

DR. LATERNSER: I shall try to be as brief as possible. I must say before hand, however, that it will be impossible for me to do this questioning within three hours, but the subsequent interrogations will be much shorter and we will catch up on the time that I lose here.

MR. TAYLOR: Very well.

DIRECT EXAMINATION.

BY DR. LATERNSER:

Q What was the last rank you held?

A My rank was that of Field Marshall.

Q When were you born?

A On November 24, 1887.

Q What important offices did you hold within the Wehrmacht?

A In 1907 I became an officer in the 3rd Guard Regiment and I participated in the first World War, partly in front service and partly at home. After the World War, I was a member of the border protection in Silesia, which was to be taken away from us by the Poles. I then was taken over by the Reichswehr. I spent part of my time at the front and part of my time with the General Staff. In 1929 I entered for the first time the Troop Office of the Reichs Ministry Office of War, that is the central office for war.

Q Since when have you been a member of the group that has been mentioned in the indictment as being of the General Staff and OKW?

A Since the end of September of 1942. At that time I was appointed Commander in Chief of the Eleventh Army.

Q How did you happen to receive this appointment?

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A Up to that time I had been general of an Armored Corps in the eastern front. One night I received a telephone call and was informed I was to proceed to the Ukraine as quickly as possible in order to take over the command of the Eleventh Army, as my predecessor had been killed in action.

Q That is you did not volunteer for this position, you were ordered to take this position?

A I was ordered to take this position like all army leaders, according to their military qualifications.

Q In the autumn of 1929 you entered the Military Central Office for the first time. What rank did you have and what was your work within the troop office?

A I held the rank of lieutenant colonel in the General Staff of Department P-1 and my work was concerned with the employment of troops in case of internal disorders or frontier clashes. This department also concerned itself with the work that was concerned with military troops such as drills and maneuvers that the military leaders and commanders have to have for the recruiting and training of soldiers.

Q Does this cover all the work of Department P-1?

A Yes, that was the work of Department P-1, the employment of troops in case of internal disorders and frontier clashes.

Q Was any mobilization work or preparations for mobilization carried out by this Department and if so for what purpose?

A Up to the year 1929, no preparatory mobilization work in Germany whatsoever was carried on. The first preparations for mobilization was made on April 1, 1930. This work comprized raising the seven divisions that we had to twenty-

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one in case of an enemy attack. This was possible, because as far as the number was concerned, according to the Versailles treaty, the number of men who were discharged every year now sufficed for such an increase. As far as arms were concerned, this was not possible, so that at the most one third or one half of those men who would have to fight at the foremost front could not be supplied with such arms. The purpose of the preparations was that we did not want to have our soldiers attacked in case of an attack by one of our next door neighbors.

Q Were the higher leaders trained for possible war and were special methods of training worked upon?

A Within this time concentration plans were not drawn up at all. The first concentration plans were worked up in 1935. The higher leaders, of course, were trained as far as a possible resistance was concerned in case of enemy attack. This training consisted of military war games or training troops. The subject of these maneuvers was solely a defense within the German Reich proper. No attack toward the outside was in any case worked out in the training and the purpose of this resistance to an attack was merely to win time for the machinery of the League of Nations to be set in motion in favor of Germany.

Q Will you please tell us very briefly what political picture the high military leaders had at that time?

A As I was employed in the most inner central office of the OKH, I am able to give good information on this. The military leaders of Germany were at that time under the pressure of the Cohersion Coalition. We had seven divisions - three cavalry divisions, together with 100,000 men, no heavy artillery,

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no tanks, no Air Force, no fortifications and no armament industries, no munition reserve and no man-power reserve. At our western front, France had 40 divisions in peace time and 100 divisions in war time.

DR. KEMPNER: We have heard the story over and over again that France had so many divisions, Poland had so many divisions. I don't think this line of questioning contributes the slightest thing to the testimony of the General Staff and I protest to this line of questioning.

MR. TAYLOR: Do you center this line of testimony as a defense for the General Staff or not?

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MR. TAYLOR: This is a repetition and if we continue this way we will not be able to finish with your other two witness this week, which is the life of this commission. You can go ahead and proceed with the witnees, however, try to be as brief as possible.

BY DR. LATERNSER:

Q You may continue.

A I shall not mention any numbers, I will just say our enemy had about thirty times as many soldiers as we did, furthermore, Poland, our eastern neighbor carried out mobilization at our frontieer which disrupted us every two years. The territorial claims that Poland, Czecho Slovakia and certain French circles had concerning German territory was generally known. In this respect, the German military leadership placed their one hope in the League

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of Nations. Our military measures and preparations were solely direct to the end to afford a temporary resistance to any attack. For example, in order to prevent Poland, through the occupation of Upper Silesia, we concerned ourselves extensively with the question of the intervening of the League of Nations in such a possible conflict.

Q At that time, or at any time later, did any kind of a group or unification of the military leaders or the General Staff take place in order to carry on political activities?

A Such a group was completely out of the question or impossible. The German Army is basically different from any other. In Japan, Turkey, Bulgaria and Servia such groupings did take place, but with us, according to the training we had, this was impossible and would never have been suffered. A group with the purpose of political activities or planning political parties was out of the question. We soldiers mistrusted all parties, because every part in Germany placed its own interests above the interests of Germany. We all considered ourselves the trustees of the unity of Germany in this respect and considering the attacks that we had as soldiers, we were all of this opinion and there was no other opinion.

Q Several witness have been asked concerning the attitude of the Wehrmacht toward the National Socialist Party. I want to ask if the military leaders approved of the methods of the National Socialist Party?

A The National Socialist aim of unification was according to our attitude, but not the National Socialistic methods. From the very beginning, we had no understanding at all for the so-called master race. We disapproved of the church policy and also were completely opposed to the labor policy. The

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military leaders, for example, the chiefs of the army leadership, Hammerstein and Von Schleiche, the commanders in chiefs, were doubtlessly opposed to National Socialism. The were good friends of mine.

Q Did political aspects play any part concerning the role of high military leaders in their office?

A No, up to the very last years of the war, the selection of Military leaders took place according to military standards. One exception, however, was the appointment of Von Reicheman on the occasion of seigure of power at the head of the Security Office of the Reichsministry. Within the course of the years, one general was perhaps promoted and certain favoritism shown because he knew Hitler personnally. However, from the year 1938 an increasing number of removals of military leaders took place because they were, or it was alleged they were, not adherents of National Socialism.

Q Even if the higher military leaders were not selected according to political viewpoints and if there was a certain opposition between the Wehrmacht and the party, nevertheless a certain grouping or association could have taken place?

A A certain unification with the party was outof the question, as we were opposed to the party methods. Immediately after the seizure of power there arose a continual increase of opposition between the Wehrmacht and the SA. I was able to follow developments closely as chief of staff of the service command in Berlin. In two speeches Hitler deliberately tried to bring about an agreement with the leaders of the Wehrmacht, the SS and the SA and to bring about a unification. Matters went so far that Hitler in one speech said if the army and SA persisted in their opposition, he would have

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to have them shot. On June 30th the Roehm Putsch took place and the SS was actually willing to put the army aside and put itself in the army's place. Hitler averted this danger by his own interferrance at the last moment, but the whole affair points to the sharp opposition we had at that time. If Hitler had not interferred, there doubtlessly would have been a fight for power between the Wehrmacht and the SA.

Q The prosecution maintains that the organizations were not bound to what was the legal law. What about the Wehrmacht in this respect?

A Within the Wehrmacht, law and right for his country has always been maintained. We did not have a so-called right at one's own discretion. When Hitler changed the existing legal way of the military court procedure, which had existed up to that time and created a new law, he was entitled to do so on the basis of the constitution and we were bound to do as he ordered.

Q How far did the leading military officials have a hand in the basic political and military decisions and how far were they informed of the positions and the decisions?

A The military leaders were not asked to participate in political decisions, as a rule they were not informed until after Hitler had made his decision. In some cases he held speeches with the generals and these speeches represented a so-called commande of order where he expressed his will and also gave his reasons. What the individual military leaders were told differed according to the rank they held. The immediate surrounding gropp of the Fuehrer, the heads of the OKW, for example, doubtlessly learned a little bit more and doubtlessly a little bit earlier than did the others of these decisions. It is possible too that they were able to speak with

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Hitler concerning this decision before he made it public. The next rank in command were those of the commanders in chiefs of the different army branches, they were not asked concerning political decisions, with perhaps the exception of Goering, but they had perhaps the possibility to give a suggestion or advice concerning their own military sphere of work. The next groups under them, the commanders in chiefs of the armies were not able to do so in any case, they learned of the Fuehrer's decisions when they had been perfected. According to the order to maintain secrecy, they only learned what was of immediate use to them, above all they had no possible way at all to check the idea on a military, political or economical sphere. They simply received the orders that they as soldiers were to carry out and held the responsibility for the solution of the task set to them.

Q Were not the higher military leaders occasionally asked to give their advise?

A The giving of advise by a subordinate in a German Army is something that does not exist in the German Army. The idea of a council of war was not considered at all. One time General Blaskowitz said he had reported to the Fuehrer concerning the battle of Kutno. I myself experienced this as chief of staff with General Field Marshall Rundstedt. Blaskowitz reported on his intention concerning the battle of Kutno and we gathered from what he said we would not be able to bring it to a victorious end, thereupon we took the commands in our own hands as commanders of army groups.

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Q When did you return to the general staff?

A In 1932 I was sent to the front, and in February 1934 I returned to the general staff. I was chief of the general staff of Service Command 3 in Berlin. In the summer of 1935 I became head of the first department of the general staff of the Army. That is what we call the Operational Department. I remained there until the Autumn of 1936, and then became Deputy Chief of Staff on the general staff, and as such the first assistant and the Deputy of the Chief of the General Staff.

MR. TAYLOR: We will have recess for ten minutes.

(recess)

BY DR. LATERNSNER:

Q Witness, you just testified that in 1935 you were again taken on the general staff, first, as chief of the operations in the department, and then as a deputy chief of staff, and on account of this position you had special knowledge of military events at that time. What do you know particularly concerning of Germany withdrawal from the League of Nations, and the attitude and opinion concerning it?

A I should like to make a correction on what I was asked, since what time I belonged to the circle of the people indicted here was said in September 1932. That was a mistake. It should be September 1941. Concerning Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, the military leaders so far as I know were not asked. Had we had been asked concerning it, the attitude in the army leadership group at that time was and would have been expressed in their misgivings concerning any withdrawal from the League, because in this way Germany lost the possibility of having the League of Nations pronounce judgment in Germany's favor in case of an army conflict.

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This possibility of interference on the part of the League of Nations was for us the sole protection against any possibility of attack on the side of one of our neighbors. On the other hand, we agreed to leaving the disarmament conference because this conference after fifteen years of negotiations had led to no results.

Q And the declaration of military sovereign ty was surely not only a political affair,but also a militaryaffair. Were the military leaders asked about this beforehand?

A As to whom was asked that question concerning it previously, I don't know, perhaps von Blomberg as the commander in chief of the ground forces, and perhaps Witzleben as commander in chief of the Service Command,but none of those were asked to it previously. I learned of it through the radio. If the general staff had been asked its opinion at that time, I am sure that there would not have been asked the number of divisions required by Hitler, that is, thirty-six divisions. If we had been asked, we would have been satisfied with the twenty-one divisions, because we wanted to build up the army in the near future on a very solid basis, and this seen from a military viewpoint would have been impossible when applied to thirty-six divisions,and surpassed our abilities.

DR. LATERNSNER: Previous witnesses have already testified on this question, so this will suffice.

BY DR. LATERNSNER:

Q As Chief of Operational Department, you yourself experienced this occupation of the Rhineland. How did the events at that time as seen from the viewpoint of military leaders take place?

A The discussion concerning the occupation of the Rhineland had been brought up by the president,and we saw the solution of the problem during means of negotiations and discussions. The order to me as chief of

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the Operational Department came as a complete surprise. The chief of the general staff had himself received the order from the Reich Minister of Defense, and had to pass it onto me, and I had to see to it that the order was carried out sofar as transfer and troop movements were concerned within a very few hours, for on the very next morning a report was supposed to take place. The majority of the military leaders learned of this over the radio. I later learned that Hitler had informed the chief of the Army, von Blomberg, and Lt. Col. Frisch; both of these generals told Hitler of their misgivings concerning such a one sided solution on the question, and suggested anyway that only three divisions be transported or moved across the line in order not to provoke France. The French then mobilized thirteen divisions; von Blomberg suggested that our divisions be withdrawn to the other bank or line, and this incident was the reason why later on the political leaders always looked upon the military leaders with such distrust. Hitler himself once confirmed this from the original incident.

Q As you yourself said, you were responsible as Chief of the Operations Department for concentrations and preparations in case of an attack. What happened in this respect?

A The first troop concentration plan for the concentration of troops at the frontier was made in the Autumn of 1935. From 1930 to '35 no concentration plans were made. This concentration plan had been known as "Case Red" and only concerned a defensive concentration. There were to be in this plan three army groups in the West for an attack by France, two or three armies in the East for a possible attack by Poland, and only frontier protection for the possible attack by Czechoslovakia. Then in 1936

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or 1937 the second plan was drawn up, and this was known as a "Plan Green". This plan was based on the knowledge we would not be able to protect our borders in case there should be a war that we would have at the full front at the same time, for example, Poland, France or Czechoslovakia, and France. In the meantime the attack with Poland had been concluded,and this gave us a certain sense of security. We believe that if they could have had, forexample, to try to suppress an attack on Czechoslovakia, we would in the long run be oppressed. The only solution of this problem would have been to hold off the French in the west for some time while we attacked Czechoslovakia in the east.

Q When did you leave your position of Chief of the Operations Department ,and to take over the position of Deputy Chief of Staff?

A In August 1936.

Q Is it true that you are especially well informed concerning the foreign political difference as seen from the military standpoint,but to what extend did the military leaders have a hand in a decision to annex Austria?

A Only sofar as they were not heard at all. The viewpoint ofthe situation was as follows: One morning about 11 o'clock I was called to the Reich Chancellery to see Hitler, because the Commander in Chief von Brauschitsch was not in Berlin. Hitler then told us that on account of Schuschnigg's decision to solve the Austrian problem by a plebiscite, Hitler himself would now have to solve the Austrian question,and he asked us for our military proposals concerning the occupation, the military occupation of Austria. He said on this occasion that all the troops would be received with rejoicing. The chief of the general staff then told him that

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we had not prepared any such measures in any way whatsoever. The political leaders of this group had never asked us to prepare for such an event. That we should, therefore, have to improvise mobilization of the Bavarian corps. Hitler consented, and then said that he would have to enter Austria next Saturday. That was the day before the plebiscite. Therefore, the orders concerning the collection of troops, and preparations would have be able to be made on this very same day by six o'clock p.m. Our meeting took place at about 11 AM, therefore, I had about five to six hours time to work out the orders. The "Case Otto" mentioned by Jodl has nothing to do with it. In this case that was something quite different.

Q What was the discussion at the meetinf at or of Obersalzberg, Case 38, on the entry into Sudetenland?

Q This meeting was quite an exceptional one. Hitler had ordered that the general staff, for instance, be present, as to whom in case of conflict with Czechoslovakia would be commander in chef of the armies. He had obviously done this because he knew that Chief of the General Staff Beck, as well as the generals, were against any measures which might lead to any eventual war. It is well known that the chief of the general staff had to retire because of this affair. Hitler then said he wanted as members or representatives those of the younger generation, as they would be less critical of his plans. However, he was decieved in this, because we too clearly told him of any possible solution would possibly lead to a two front war.

Q This lead to quite a heated discussion with General Wintersheim, who expressed criticism with a view of what happened.

A This discussion is backed by the war diary of Jodl, and he said here that that evidently had happened, and did not believe in the psychology

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of the Fuehrer. That is what his attitude was that last time. I have to add at this time I was commander of a division, and that after this meeting in September I carried out the maneuver as it had been intended to be carried out. It proved the time when we looked upon this affair in the Hitler manner.

Q What was the military roll that you played in the operation of the Czechoslovakiaan affair?

A The part that I played in the occupation of Sudeten in the Autumn of 1938 was as Chief of the General Staff of an army commanded by von Leeb.

Q Did you learn of the occupation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia in the Spring of 1939?

A I learned of this action after it had been carried out. I was at that time commander of a division in Silesia, and although I was a commander of a division stationed at the border, I was only informed afterwards by the general commander in Breslau. Under this conversation I was out of hand on it, I was not informed of that.

Q What was your position in the Poland campaign?

A I was Chief of the General Staff of the Army group, south, and afterwards led by von Rundstedt.

Q Did you hear of the concentration plan against Poland at the time that you were chief of the operation department, or did you as chief of staff?

A On 4 February 1938, I was transferred from the old command and I can say I did know nothing of this. This was worked upon until 1939 at the expressed orders of Hitler.

Q Did you attend the meeting that took place on 27 August on the Obersalzberg?

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A Yes.

Q What impression did you have?

A The impression we had was the following: First, when Hitler wanted to solve the corridor question he did not mention that he had any plan of the separation of the Poles, and the question only was that the Poland situation was quite hopeless, because Hitler said and proved by military reasons that the Western powers would not interfere in this case. Moreover he also had mentioned he had given indications of a plan of a pact that had been formed with Soviet Russia, and known indications that Soviet Russia would also participate. The third impression was that this meeting, too, was only a political bluff up to this time by the military, and measures had been carried on under a strict secrecy order to this meeting but where all the military commanders were present it could not be kept a secret.

DR LATERNSNER: I will finish my question on that in a minute.

MR TAYLOR: All right.

DR LATERNSNER: Q What did you think of the military intentions of Poland at that time? Did you know of any troop concentration of the Poles?

A We had perfectly reliable information given us by some one who was within the immediately circle of the nigher Polish quarters, and this was that Poland would concentrate her troops in the Province of Posen. This information was later confirmed by actual events. The Poles did concentrate their troops there. This could lead one to account on the possibility of skilled political maneuvers in case Poland did not want to give in that would make Poland become the aggressor.

Q Did you know anything about this, or had you heard anything from any other military leader to the effect that Heydrich had provoked the

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attack on the Gleiwitz Radio Station?

A All of this was within the concentration of Field Marshal von Rundstedt, but in our army group this was kept entirely a secret from us, and I can only say that on 25 August when the order to invade Poland had been recalled, we believed this to be a proof that that discussion on Obersalzberg was successful, and up to the night of 31 August, I and Field Marshal von Rundstedt ~~be~~ believed then that this new order to march would also be recalled, and that everything would be solved peacefully, as had been done in 1938.

Q I would like to ask one more question. Why was the city of Warsaw raided from the air?

A On 23 September we were given the order to take Warsaw by the 30th of September. Evidently because Russians were expected on the other side of the Weichsel at that time, Warsaw was being defended by a Polish army as a fortified city. We wanted to avoid a fight for the town itself by all means, because such a fight is the worse thing, not only for our troops, but also for the population, and the city itself. Therefore, we only encircled it closely, and then carried out the bombardment order of Hitler. We had decided that if this did not prove successful, we would then force the city to capitulate by storming it, and had to fight such as that took place in 1944, but that fighting in the city was to be avoided by all means.

MR TAYLOR: ~~Shall~~ We adjourn until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon the Commission adjourned to 4 July 1946 at 1000 hours)

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The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of FIELD MARSHALL ERIC VON MANSTEIN, taken on 3 July 1946.

Reporter (pp 1 — 9

Reporter (pp 10 — 17

CERTIFIED TO :

Commissioner

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Q What is your name?

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A I was ordered to take this position like all army leaders, according to their military qualifications.

Q In the autumn of 1929 you entered the Military Central Office for the first time. What rank did you have and what was your work within the troop office?

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of Nations. Our military measures and preparations were solely direct to the end to accord a temporary resistance to any attack. For example, in order to prevent Poland, through the occupation of Upper Silesia, we concerned ourselves extensively with the question of the intervening of the League of Nations in such a possible conflict.

Q At that time, or at any time later, did any kind of a group or unification of the military leaders or the General Staf take place in order to carry on political activities?

A Such a group was completely out of the question or impossible. The German Army is basically different from any other. In Japan, Turkey, Bulgaria and Servia such groupings did take place, but with us, according to the training we had, this was impossible and would never have been suffered. A group with the purpose of political activities or planning political parties was out of the question. We soldiers mistrusted all parties, because every part in Germany placed its own interests above the interests of Germany. We all considered ourselves the trustees of the unity of Germany in this respect and considering the attacks that we had as soldiers, we were all of this opinion and there was no other opinion.

Q Several witnesses have been asked concerning the attitude of the Wehrmacht toward the National Socialist Party. I want to ask if the military leaders approved of the methods of the National Social Party?

A The National Socialist aim of unification was according to our attitude, but not the National Socialistic methods. From the very beginning, we had no understanding at all for the so-called master race. We disapproved of the church policy and also were completely opposed to the labor policy. The military leaders, for example, the chiefs of the army leadership,

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Hammerstein and von Schleicher, the commanders in chiefs, were doubtlessly opposed to National Socialism. They were good friends of mine.

Q Did political aspects play any part concerning the role of high military leaders in their office?

A No, up to the very last years of the war, the selection of Military leaders took place according to military standards. One exception, however, was the appointment of von Reichenau on the occasion of seizure of power at he head of the Security Office of the Reichsministry. Within the course of the years, one genral was perhaps promoted and certain favoritism shown because he knew Hitler personally. However, from the year 1938 an increasing number of removals of military leaders took place because they were, or it was alleged they were, not adherents of National Socialism.

Q Even if the higher military leaders were not selected according to political viewpoints and if there was a certain opposition between the Wehrmacht and the party, nevertheless a certain grouping or association could have taken place?

A A certain unification with theparty was out of the question, as we were opposed to the party methods. Immediately after the seizure of power there arose a continual increase of opposition between the Wehrmacht and the S.A. I was able to follow developments closely as chief of staff of the service command in Berlin. In two speeches Hitler deliberately tried to bring about an agreement with the leaders of the Wehrmacht, the SS and the S.A. and to bring about a unification. Matters went so far that Hitler in one speech said if the army and S.A. persisted in their opposition he would have to have them shot. On June 30th the Roehm Putsch took place and the SS was actually willing to put the army aside and put itself in the army's place. Hitler averted

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this danger by his own interferance at the last moment, but the whole affair points to the sharp opposition we had at that time. If Hitler had not interferred, there doubtlessly would have been a fight for power between the Wehrmacht and the SS.

Q The prosecution maintains that the organizations were not bound to what was the legal law. What about the Wehrmacht in this respect?

A Within the Wehrmacht, law and right for his country has always been maintained. We did not have a so-called right at one's own discretion. When Hitler changed the existing legal way of the military court procedure, which had existed up to that time and created a new law, he was entitled to do so on the basi of the constitution and we were bound to do as he ordered.

Q How far did the leading military officials have a ha in the basic political and military decisions and how far were they informed of the positions and the decisions?

A The military leaders were not asked to participate in political decisions, as a rule they were not informed until after Hitler had made his decision. In some cases he held speeches with the generals and these speeches represented a so-called command of order where he expressed his will and also gave his reasons. What the individual military leaders were told differed according to the rank they held. The immediate surrounding group of the Fuehrer, the heads of the OKW, for example, doubtlessly learned a little bit more and doubtlessly a little bit earlier than did the others of these decisions. It is possible too that they were able to speak with Hitler concerning this decision before he made it public. The next rank in command were those of the commanders in chiefs of the different army branches, they were not asked concerning political decisions,

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with perhaps the exception of Goering, but they had perhaps the possibility to give a suggestion or advice concerning their own military sphere of work. The next groups under them, the commanders in chiefs of the armies were not able to do so in any case, they learned of the Fuehrer's decisions when they had been perfected. According to the order to maintain secrecy, they only learned what was of immediate use to them, above all they had no possible way at all to check the idea on a military, political or economical sphere. They simply received the orders that they as soldiers were to carry out and hold the responsibility for the solution of the task set to them.

Q Were not the higher military leaders occasionally asked to give their advise?

A The giving of advise by a subordinate in a German Army is something that does not exist in the German Army. The idea of a council of war was not considered at all. One time General Blaskowitz said he had reported to the Fuehrer concerning the battle of Kutno. I myself experienced this as chief of staff with General Field Marshall Rundstedt. Blaskowitz reported on his intention concerning the battle of Kutno and we gathered from what he said we would hot be able to bring it to a victorious end, thereupon we took the commands in our own hands as commanders of army groups.

Q When did you return to the general staff?

A In 1932 I was sent to the front, and in February 1934 I returned to the general staff. I was chief of the general staff of Service Command 3 in Berlin. In the summer of 1935 I became head of the fursteepartment of the general staff of the Army. That is what we call the Operational Department. I remained there until the Autumn of 1936, and then became Deputy Chief of Staff on the general staff, and as such the first assistant

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and the Deputy of the Chief of the General Staff.

MR. TAYLOR : We will have recess for ten minutes

(recess)

BY DR. LATERNSER :

Q Witness, you just testified that in 1935 you were again taken on the general staff, first, as chief of the operations in the department, and then as a deputy chief of staff, and on account of this position you had special knowledge of military events at that time. What do you know particularly concerning Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, and the attitude and opinion concerning it?

A I should like to make a correction on what I was asked, since what time I belonged to the circle of the people indicted here was said in September 1932. That was a m stake. It should be September 1941. Concerning Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, the military leaders so far as I know were not asked. Had we had been asked concerning it, the attitude in the army leadership group at that time was and would habe been expressed in their misgivings concerning any withdrawal from the League, because in this way Germany lost the possibility of having the League of Nations pronounce judgement in Germany's favor in case of an army conflict.

This possibility of interference on the part of the League of Nations was for us the sole protection against any possibility of attack on the side of one of our neighbors. On the other hand, we agreed to leaveing the disarmament conference because this conference after fifteen years of negotiations had led to no results.

Q. And the declaration of military soveriegnty was surely not only a political affair, but also a military affair. Were the military leaders ask about this before hand ?

A. As to whom was asked that question concerning it previsouly, I don't know perhaps von Blomberg as the commander in chief of the ground forces, and perhaps Witzleben as commander in chief of the Service Command, but none of those were asked to it previously. I learned of it through the radio. If the general staff had been asked its opinion at that time, I am sure that there would not have been asked the number of divisions required by Hitler, that is, thirty-six divisions. If we had been asked, we would have been satisfied with the twenty-one divisions, because we want to build up the army in the near future on a very solid basis, and this seen from a military viewpoint would have been impossible when applied to thirty-six divisions, and surpassed our abilities.

DR. LATERNSER: Previous witnesses have already testified on this question, so this will suffice.

BY DR. LATERNSER:

Q. As chief of Operational Department, you yourself experienced this occ tion of the Rhineland. How did the events at that time as seen from the viewpoint of military leaders take place ?

A. The discussion concerning the occupation of the Rhineland had been brought up by the president, and we saw the solution of the problem during means of negotiations and discussions. The order to me as chief of the Operational Department came as a complete surprise. The Chief of the general staff had himself received the order from the Reich Minister of Defens and had to pass it onto me, and I had to see to it that the order was carried out so far as transfer and troop movements were concerned within a very few hours, for on the very next morning a report was supposed to take place.

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The majority of the military leaders learned of this over the radio. I later learned that Hitler had informed the chief of the Army, von Blomber and Lt. Col, Frisch; both of these generals told Hitler of their misgivin concerning such a one sided solution on the question, and suggested anyway that only three divisions be transported or moved across the line in order not to provoke France. The French then mobilized thirteen divisions; von Blomberg suggested that our divisions be withdrawn to the other bank or line, and this incident was the reason why later on the political leade always looked upon the military leaders with such distrust. Hitler himsel once confirmed this from the original incident.

Q. As you yourself said, you were responsible as Chief of the Operations Department for concentrations and preparations in case of an attack. What happened in this respect ?

A. The first troop concentration plan for the concentration of troops at the frontier was made in the Autumn of 1935. From 1930 to 1935 no concentration plans were made. This concentration plan had been known as "Case Red" and only concerned a defensive concentration. There were to be in this plan three army groups in the West for an attack by France, two or three armies in the East for a possible attack of Poland, and only frontier protection for the possible attack by Czechoslovakia. Then in 1936 or 1937 the second plan was drawn up and this was known as a "Plan Green" . This plan was based on the knowledge we would not be able to protect our borders in case there should be a war that we would have at the full front at the same time, for example, Poland, France or Czechoslo-vakia. In the meantime the attack with Poland had been concluded, and this gave us a certain sense of security. We believe that if they could have had, for example, to try to suppress an attack on Czechoslovakia, we would in the long run be oppressed. The only solution of this problem woul have been to hold off the French in the west for some time while we attacked Czechoslovakia in the east.

Q. When did you leave your position of Chief of the Operations Departmen and to take over the position of Deputy Chief of Staff ?

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A. In August 1936.

Q. Is it ture that you are especially well informed concerning the foreign political difference as seen from the military standpoint, but to what extend did the military leaders have a hand in a decision to annex Austria.

A. Only so far as they were not heard at all. The viewpoint of the situation was as follows : One morning about 11 o'clock I was called to the Reich Chancellory to see Hitler, because the Commander in Chief von Braushitsch was not in Berlin. Hitler then told us that on account of Schusschnigg's decision to solve the Austrian problem by a plebiscite, Hitler himself would now have to solve the Austrian question, and he asked us for our military proposals concerning the occupation, the military occupation of Austria. He said on this occasion that all the troops would be received with rejoicing. The chief of the general staff then told him that we had not prepared any such measures in any way whatsoever. The political leaders of this group had never asked us to prepare for such an event. That we should, therefore, have to improvise mobilization of the Bavarian corps. Hitler consented, and then said that he would have to enter Austria next Saturday. That was the day before the plebiscite. Therefore, the orders concerning the collection of troops, and preparations would have be able to be made on this very same day by six o'clock p,m. Our meeting took place at about 11 a.m. therefore, I had about five to six hours time to work out the orders. The "Case Otto" mentioned by Jodl, has nothing to do with it. In this case that was something quite different,

Q. What was the discussion at the meeting at or of Obersalzberg, Case 38 on the entry into Sudetenland ?

A. This meeting was quite an exceptional one. Hitler had ordered that the general staff, for instance, be present, as to whom in case of conflict with Czechoslovakia would be commander in chief of the armies. He had obviously done this because he knew that Chief of the General Staff Beck, as well as the generals, were against any measures which might lead to any eventual war. It is well known that the chief of the general staff had to

retire because of this affair. Hitler then said he wanted as members or re presentatives those of the younger generation, as they would be less criti cal of his plans. However, he was deceived in this, because we too clearly told him of any possible solution would possibly lead to a two front war.

Q. This lead to quite a heated discussion with General Wintersheim, who expressed criticism with a view of what happened.

A. This discussion is backed by the war diary of Jodl, and he said here that that evidently had happened, and did not believe in the psychology.

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of the Fuehrer. That is what his attitude was that last time. I have to add at this time I was commander of a division, and that after this meeting in September I carried out the maneuver as it had been intended to be carried out. It proved the time when we looked upon this affair in the Hitler manner

Q What was the military roll that you played in the operation of the Czechoslovakian affair?

A The part that I played in the occupation of Sudeten in the Autumn of 1938 was as chief of the General Staff of an army commanded by von Leeb.

Q Did you learn of the occupation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia in the Spring of 1939.

A I learndd of this action after it had been carried out. I was at that time commander of a division in Silesia, and although I was a commander of a division stationed at the border, I was only informed afterwards by the general commander in Breslau. Under this conversation I was out of hand on it, I was not informed of that.

Q What was your position in the Poland campaign?

A I was Chief of the General Staff of the Army Group, South, and afterwards led by von Rundstedt.

Q Did you hear of the concentration plan against Poland at the time that you were chief of the operation department, or did you as chief of staff?

A On 4 February 1938 I was transferred from the old command and I can say I didknow nothing of this. This was worked upon until 1939 at the expressed orders of Hitler.

Q Did you attend the meeting that took place on 27 August on the Obersalzberg?

A Yes.

Q What impression did you have?

A The impression we had was the follwing: First, when Hitler wante to solve the corridor question he did not mention that he had any plan of the separation of the Poles, and the question only was that the Poland situation was quite hopeless, because Hitler said and proved by military reasons thatthe Western powers would not interfere in this case. Moreover,

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he also had mentioned he had given indications of a plan of a pact that had been formed with Soviet Russia, and known indications that Soviet Russia would also participate. The third impression was that this meeting, too, was only a political bluff up to this time by the military, and measures had been carried out under a strict secrecy order to this meeting but where all the military commanders were present it could not be kept a secret

DR. LATERNSER: I will finish my question on that in a minute.

MR. TAYLOR: All right.

BY DR. LATERNSER:

Q What did you think of the military intentions of Poland at that time? Did you know of any troop concentration of the Poles?

A We had perfectly reliable information given us by some one who was within the immediate circle of the higher Polish quarters, and this was that Poland would concentrate her troops in the Province of Posen. This information was later confirmed by actual events. The Poles did concentrate their troops there. This could lead one to count on the possibility of skilled political maneuvers in case Poland did not want to give in that would make Poland become the aggressor.

Q Did you know anything about this, or had you heard anything from any other military leader to the effect that Heydrich had provoked the attack on the Gleiwitz Radio Station?

A All of this was within the concentration of Field Marshal von Rundstedt, but in our army group this was kept entirely a secret from us, and I can only say that on 25 August when the order to invade Poland had been recalled, we believed this to be a proof that that discussion on Obersalzberg was successful, and up to the night of 31 August, I and Field Marshal von Rundstedt believed then that this new order to march would also be recalled, and that everything would be solved peacefully, as had been done in 1938.

Q I would like to ask one more question. Why was the city of Warsaw raided from the air?

A On 23 September we were given the order to take Warsaw by the 30th of September. Evidently because Russians were expected on the other side

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of the Weichsel at that time, Warsaw was being defended by a Polish army as a fortified city. We wanted to avoid a fight for the town itself by all means, because such a fight is the worse thing, not only for our troops, but also for the population, and the city itself. Therefore, we only encircled it closely, and then carried out the bombardment order of Hitler. We had decided that if this did not prove successful, we would then force the city to capitulate by storming it, and had to fight such as that took place in 1944, but that fighting in the city was to be avoided by all means.

MR. TAYLOR: We will adjourn until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon the Commission adjourned to 4 July 1946 at 1000 hours).

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of FIELD MARSHAL ERIC VON MANSTEIN, taken on 3 July 1946.

Alice Meehan
Reporter

Charles Gallagher
Reporter

CERTIFIED TO:

Geo. R. Taylor
Commissioner